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THE
RECOGNITION OF THE SUPERNATURAL
IN
LETTERS AND IN LIFE

AN ORATION

26.
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BY
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NOTE.

The following Oration was delivered at Cambridge, Mass., before the Phi Beta Kappa Society in Harvard University, at the Annual Meeting of that Society, July 1, 1880.

It was subsequently delivered, in substance, in New York, at the request of the Association for the Advancement of Science and Art, at the Meeting of the Association, April 11, 1881.

It is now printed, at the request of some of those who heard it, on one or other of these occasions. In a few instances, passages referred to in the text have been printed in foot-notes, for the convenience of any wishing to turn to them.

ORATION.

MR. PRESIDENT: GENTLEMEN OF THE SOCIETY:

IT is a brilliant and prophetic enthusiasm of our times which finds its incentive in the advancing mastery of man over external nature. To an extent not always equalled in political, military, or religious enthusiasms, it justifies itself by what man has positively achieved, in his long wrestle with the vast and energetic physical system in which he is placed. He knows more of it: through the widened range of geographical exploration, through the broader scope and the finer exactness of scientific inquiry, through the occasional surprising insight of poetical genius, seizing the secret rhythm of its laws, and anticipating the more gradual discoveries of research. He uses it, accordingly, with clearer intelligence, a more assured and fruitful freedom.

The impulse to govern has certainly had no fairer field, or nobler exhibition, than it has with the modern student of nature. Not content with climbing the lucent steeps, by lens and analysis, that he may follow the stars in their courses, may measure their masses, prefigure their motion, and even detect their forming elements, or with making the rocks give up

their fossils, unroll their records of fire-mist and of glacier, and show how they are arched and wedged to maintain the continents—not satisfied to explore the physical constitution of the animal tribes, though hidden miles deep beneath the sea-surface, to interpret the physiology and chemistry of plants, or to search for the secret origin of life, and trace its development in the manifold marvels of organization—he commands admiration by making the forces, vital or mechanical, which his search ascertains, contribute to assist human progress, in deft, elastic, unwearied service. His successes in this direction give ever-fresh surprise to the century: as the vapor which fire smites from the water pulls his trains, or pushes his vast iron-framed hulls over the sea; as the magical wire transmits his thought, without interval of time, to distant lands; as sunbeams paint instantaneous pictures, of faces, palaces, landscapes, clouds, while hurtless lightnings begin already to illuminate his towns; as vegetables and minerals, whose virtues lately were unsuspected, yield medicines for his sickness, tonics for his weakness, balms for his pain.

Man seems approaching, with no dilatory steps, the point where he shall have supremacy, by reason of his knowledge, and of the instruments with which skill supplies him, over the forces hitherto hidden in the great complex of what we call Nature; when his alert and indefatigable will, not aspiring to arrest or radically change the vast and subtile cosmical ener-

gies, shall be able to use them with easy and secure control. Already, in part—hereafter, it seems probable, with a completeness only indicated now—he is to have at his command, under the beneficent primitive laws which no ingenuity can amend or avoid, the physical powers that play like thought, yet work with an energy demiurgic, in the structure of the globe. Then the planet shall be subjected to him, whose direct muscular hold upon its mass is so insignificant: presenting its forces for his employment, its wealths for his possession, its secrets of beauty for his gladness and culture, while it also bears him in silent smoothness amid the vast aerial spaces.

It is natural that the advance thus realized, and the further advance which seems predicted, should be regarded with an animating pride, and that their effects upon civilization should be anticipated with fond expectation.

Already those effects have been manifold and important. Not only have we better houses in consequence, softer clothing, more elaborate furniture and more various foods, quicker passage from point to point, larger opportunities for making leisure agreeable and labor productive. This ampler mastery of man over nature tends to the increase of general intelligence, to the liberalizing of governments, and the wider establishment of popular freedoms. While it gives incessant motive to invention, it encourages as well the far ventures of commerce. While it keeps

the chemist busy in his laboratory, the mineralogist with his hammer, or the civil engineer with his exact and immense calculations, it expands the range and augments the equipment of institutions of learning. It tends as well to brace and exhilarate the spirit of peoples, making each person, whose life is embraced in their composite unity, more conscious of the common sovereignty over whatever furthers enterprise. It brings nations into neighborhood, and gives growing intimacy to their moral and jural relations with each other ; thus tending at last to realize the ideal of a Race compacted of many peoples, each with its idioms of law, custom, art, language, but all united in common endeavors and a common aspiration.

The progress thus in part achieved, and which looks for completion, is one in which all must rejoice who recognize the relation between an improved outward civilization and a wider and more practical popular training ; who see how arts, industries, freedoms, inspire and sustain the public tone of hopefulness and of courage. Perhaps nothing else in the brilliant history of human endeavor illustrates better the dignity and the undaunted boldness of the spirit in man, than does the fact that he can so explore and dominate the serviceable system of physical forces amid which he stands. It was the signal of unrivalled empire, in the day of Rome's power, when tribute came to the conquering city from peoples of whom the generation just passed had not even heard. It sets a

superb crown upon man that so many sciences and practical arts, unknown to our childhood, now bring to him ensigns and troops, spices and gold.

But while this is true, it is true also that one effect follows, though not perhaps in necessary consequence, from this progressive control of man over natural forces, whose promises are not of the best. It is seen in the feebler impression which he takes of anything grand, powerful, even real, above and beyond this apparent and sensible frame of things; in the doubt which comes by degrees to possess him whether there be any over-world, invisible but transcendent, with which he stands in essential relations. Certainly the apprehension of such surpassing realms of being, inaccessible to man's search, though not eluding the reach of his thought, has been more vivid in other times than it is at present, among other peoples than it is among us. The mass, and the multiform attraction, of the physical, now pull the thought from ethereal heights. Men are too busy with the proximate provinces of construction and energy to think of any outlying realms which railways can not reach, and with which telegraphs do not communicate. Present phenomena sensibly concern them. Measurable forces directly subserve their convenience or their enterprise. The practical and controlling regard of society thus fastens upon these. The "positive Philosophy" only formulates and elaborates a diffused thought, out of which it has sprung; and they are in danger of being

regarded as fanciful enthusiasts who seriously affirm that the immaterial is more permanent than matter, the spiritual more stupendous than all which the visible heavens exhibit : that there are, or may be, illimitable spheres of personal power, and of a supreme vital experience, whose light has as yet but dimly dawned on the most aspiring soul of man, but with which each, by the make of his spirit, is essentially allied, and in comparison with which the furthest expansion, the most commanding or fruitful energy, of that which is natural becomes insignificant.

There have been times when the existence of such manifold and imperative systems of life, above the present, was an axiom in thought. Undoubtedly there are those who hold it now, with as clear a conception, with a confidence as profound. But the popular literature takes slight account of it, while the general mind, in civilized lands, is only more firmly anchored to the earth by every drill which cuts the rock, by every spade which uncovers the mine, by every fresh terrestrial force which is engaged for human use. It tends to hold in abeyance, if not to deny, the tremendous proposition of the existence and presence of a governing God. It somewhat doubts if consciousness be not a mere function of the brain, and if there be any personal career awaiting the spirit beyond the grave. And it wholly ignores, if it does not even scornfully reject, the existence of multitudinous persons and powers—like the Thrones, Dominations,

Princedom, of Milton—beyond the reach of its theorems or tubes.

We can not fail, I am sure, to recognize the tendency, whether it has our sympathy or not ; or to see that it advances with civilization, and is there most energetic and governing where the special knowledges marking our time have fullest development. And as civilized lands affect others with more and more power—making the impression not of their arts or wealths alone, but of their prevalent moral life—this tendency widens in the world. It seems to bid fair to become universal. Then those super-sensible spheres of being from which, or from the impression of which, has come large influence upon man, will cease to attract his forecasting thought. The solid globe, on which cities are builded and governments framed, over which are flung the myriad lines of railway and wire, and the smallest crinkle along whose coasts has been measured and mapped, this will be to the race which dwells on it the ultimate object of inquiry and regard. The advancing control over physical energies will satisfy aspiration ; and the strange supernal grace and gleam which have at times indisputably shot from realms beyond all reach of sense, upon the spirit and life of the world, will fail to affect the coming times.

In some of its obvious and familiar relations it is not my office to combat this tendency, or to offer critical comments upon it. But it stands connected with large departments of thought and experience,

in which we all must feel an interest ; and I can not but think that it threatens a loss, in certain directions, which we shall all desire to avoid. It may be that we, as scholarly persons, have duties to perform which are relative to it, and whose authority we shall concede.

It is evident at once that the failure to recognize any sovereign reality in spheres and systems of spiritual energy, transcending the nature which science investigates, has essential bearing upon religious thought and life ; that it sharply antagonizes that scheme of Christianity which has for centuries been in the world, whose influence has been admitted by most to be largely beneficent, and which many of us have been wont to regard as the underlying force beneath what is best in civilization. Whether or not miracles are held to be essentially associated with the substance of Christianity, it will scarcely be denied that this claims to come from a Being supreme, through those whom He had instructed and quickened, and that its promises contemplate a life on higher levels, in nobler associations, than we yet know. If, then, there be no realms above us, with which we are connected, the so-called Evangel becomes a Galilean fancy ; and the faith in which many have found hitherto their utmost wisdom and inexhaustible solace has disappeared, like the cloud of chrysolite and opal dissolved into mist. But in this relation it is not my purpose now to consider this tendency of the time, since the theme might

not wholly suit the occasion. It has relations, however, almost as plainly, to the soul of man, in its intrinsic force and sensibility, and to some chief forms in which that soul expresses its life : to art, letters, government, history, to social science, philanthropic endeavor, as well as to religion ; and in these connections it is clearly our province to seek to anticipate and to measure its effects.

I can not but feel that it threatens a loss to much which is of value in civilization ; that the recognition of spheres of being above our sense—the positive and practical recognition of such, in the minds from which others take uplift and impulse—is quite indispensable to whatever is noblest in thought and life ; and that when this passes, if it shall pass, from the general consciousness, an immense force will be deducted from the powers which have wrought for man's advancement. It may be therefore part of our business, not to suppress, but certainly to supplement, the now active tendency of thought, by bringing nearer to the average mind the things superior, which pass the limits of what we call Nature. I would offer, with your permission, a brief plea for the fresh and controlling recognition among us of what is essentially Supernatural : which can not be the object of present demonstration, yet whose reality is suggested by many facts, and the glory of which man may in a measure prophetically feel, though only its vague outlines can he see. I would do this, not so much in the

interest of religion, as of letters, philosophy, the fair humanities, the political and social elevation of man. Unless I am wholly mistaken in my judgment, there is a duty here for us.

It is at once to be observed how native to the mind appears to be the imbedded impression of something transcending the reach of Nature, as we understand that ; of realms of existence, surpassing sight, yet of substantive verity, and to whose abounding intenser life the highest which we know on the earth is partial and rude. So evident is this, that we are prepared to expect beforehand the part which this impression must have played in thought and history ; how much must have been distinctly derived from it in the spirit and the work of illustrious persons or of eminent peoples. And we ought clearly to recognize this, even if we are henceforth to feel that nothing is real but the rich little planet on which we dwell, with the groups of stars to which it is bound.

Max Müller seems to state the fact with only temperate force in his "Science of Religion," when he says: "There will be and can be no rest till we admit, what can not be denied, that there is in man a third faculty"—apart, that is, from the faculty of sense, or of reason—"which I call simply," he adds, "the faculty of apprehending the Infinite, not only in religion, but in all things ; a power independent of sense and reason, a power in a certain sense contradicted by sense and reason ; but yet, I suppose, a very

real power, if we see how it has held its own from the beginning of the world—how neither sense nor reason have been able to overcome it, while it alone is able to overcome both reason and sense.”* Or, as Mr. Lecky has expressed the thought in his *History of European Morals*: “Mysticism, transcendentalism, inspiration and grace, are all words expressing the deep-seated belief that we possess fountains of knowledge apart from all the acquisitions of the senses; that there are certain states of mind, certain flashes of moral and intellectual illumination, which can not be accounted for by any play or combination of our ordinary faculties.”† He finds in harmony with this the Neo-Platonist principle, that, in divine things, the task of man is not to create or to acquire, but to educe; that the means of his perfection are not dialectics or research, but meditation and silence, with whatever may over-awe and elevate the mind, and quicken the realization of the Divine Presence.

Such a deep and quick sense of the realness and supremacy of things above the visible forms and physical forces with which we are invested—such an apprehension of reciprocal relations between the life which we have on earth and the transcending life on high, and of the possibility of the mind’s attaining strange consciousness of that in its occasional super-

* Lectures on the Science of Religion, p. 14.

† Vol. I., p. 348.

lative states—this seems to be as instinctive with man, I had almost said, as the sense of personality. It is not the late fruit of an over-stimulated civilization. On the other hand, it lies nearest man's primitive experience, and marks most distinctly his earlier development. Concerning this, at least, it is true that 'trailing clouds of glory' doth he come. All ethnic religions involve this fundamental idea, the rudest as well as the most elaborate; and the fetish of the barbarian, the fantastic idol of the Indian temple—with its eyes of glittering stones, and its grotesque combinations of abnormal images of fierceness and strength—these, as well as stately temples, Egyptian or Hellenic, illustrate the activity, and the general distribution, of that instinct in man which affirms the primacy over all that is visible of what eye hath not seen, nor the human spirit wholly conceived.

The religions of the world have not been suggested, however they have been used, by craft and ambition. They have sprung from instinctive aspirations in the soul, reaching toward persons and realms supernatural, as surely as geysers, flinging their strange and steaming columns through icy airs, have taken their impulse from profound and energetic subterranean forces. If anything, therefore, seems native to man, it is this tendency to affirm the invisible, and to reach in desire toward systems of being surpassing ours. As the frame of the bird prepares it for flight, and foreshows that as its function and joy—as the

automatic impulse of the fish propels it as by a physical force through the paths of the seas—so the intimate and continuing constitution of the soul appears to ordain man to accept and reach after what passes the limits of sense and time. If the instinct, so general, is not a real one, or if there is nothing in the facts of the Universe which furnishes foundation and argument for it, it is hard to infer anything with confidence from such a deceptive mental constitution.

It is obvious, too, that what even barbarism thus suggests, a careful and searching psychological analysis affirmatively repeats. The philosophy of the mind is certainly not an attenuated counterpart of the physiology of organization. The moment we recognize human personality, we front a marvel which sets man apart, in essential distinction, from the physical system in which he is enveloped ; which makes the spirit more than balance any masses or mechanics of matter ; which locates its imperial origin in the purple chambers of a Divine purpose ; and which almost predicts for it a destiny august, as it certainly allies it with whatever powers or spheres may be ultimate.

So, in all its higher activity, the spirit affirms its independence of occasions, its intimate relations with what is sovereign and primordial. It is not only that in ecstasy or in agony it transcends situations, finds no complete image of its intense life in anything physical, and in its bright or awful solitude is conscious only of timeless relations, and of being affined to

imperial spirits. There are spontaneous intuitions of reason, there are imperative moral affirmations, which can not be confused with careful conclusions of the practical understanding, which discern the reality of things unseen, and declare them immutable. We have to affirm the authority of that intellectual vision which seizes the absolute, the unconditioned—we have to admit that the moral nature, with its supreme sense of a moral order radiant and regnant without limit of time, is somehow related to a system above—even though we do not concede to the mystic that there are transient unspeakable states in which the spirit communes directly with unchangeable essences, and is in fellowship with minds and a life above the earth. Philosophy must say, as well as religion, that the highest light comes from above. Only the universal interprets the individual. Each balanced dew-drop implies the suns. Each simplest fact has its basis in a principle valid for all the constellations; and each human mind must rest on a mind sympathetic, creative, and eternally young. Pantheism itself, which destructively absorbs the mind into God, yet attributes to it this transcendent origin. And, on the other hand, how vehemently soever the soul may assert its separate sovereignty, when reason and conscience are purely illumined they carry in themselves a spiritual certitude of something in the universe immutable and unspeakable, yet related to us—a certitude as majestic as any moving column of cloud,

though its fleecy folds should be inlaid with heavenly fire.*

It is not, therefore, needful to make mysticism our Gospel to affirm the organic relation of the soul, by its deep and delicate and unsearchable constitution, with infinite realms of law and life. The energies and the splendors combined in such may well surpass our utmost thought, while the realness of their existence may be as apparent to the sensitive spirit, on its supreme heights, as is the hardness or the color of objects of sense.

Indeed, I do not see why any philosophy should deny this, even the most aggressively agnostic. It may hold it in abeyance, but why should it deny? Though one should believe that in primal atoms in here 'the promise and potency' of mind—that there has been, even, spontaneous evolution of nothing into force, that the only efficient causes are mechanical, and that living things are directly derived, by natural means, without break of continuity, from lifeless mat-

* "This Universal, which is the idea, he [Plato] conceives as separate from the world of phenomena, as absolutely existing Substance. It is the heavenly sphere, in which alone lies the field of truth, in which the gods and pure souls behold colorless, shapeless, incorporeal Existence; the justice, temperance, and science that are exalted above all Becoming, and exist not in another, but in their own pure essence. The true Beauty is in no living creature in earth or heaven or anywhere else, but remains in its purity everlastingly, for itself and by itself, in one form, unmoved by the changes of that which participates in it. The Essence of things exists absolutely for itself, one in kind, and subject to no vicissitude."—Zeller: "*Plato und die ältere Akademie*," Trans. of S. F. Alleyne and A. Goodwin, pp. 240-1.

ter—he must admit that somehow or other it has come to pass that a cosmos is here : which is not a congeries of unassociated facts ; in which is constant progress upward, from the oldest Laurentian protozoan to the brain of a Humboldt or a Goethe ; in which the eye of the gnat, and the shimmering outstretch of the ocean, equally indicate methodical force ; and to which, so far as we can discern, no limit is assignable, in space or in time. Why then is it not probable, even thus, that outside what we know of existence—beyond the earth, which we measure by tons, and whose pathway in space we reckon by leagues—may be outlying grander systems, in which forces have come to a finer consummation, yet with which our system stands in relation ?

It can be only a hypothesis, perhaps, on such basis of reasoning. I see not why it should not be such, and one with a practical effect on the mind. The supernatural of the savage is brought within the harmonies of law, as science advances. What seems to us to wholly surpass or contrast nature, as we know that, may be moving in like manner to yet higher melodies of plan and rule, if the Universe be as extended and various as it appears. Our ignorance, certainly, affords no warrant for a contrary judgment ; and no man who has not traversed the immensities can fairly deny those majestic and manifold realms of life toward which the spirit, in the restlessness of an expectant prevision, natively aspires.

In fact, it is the conception of these which makes the harmonious orbs of the heavens, as every night declares them to us, alluring to thought. The physical combinations of the heavens are stupendous. But what really matters it, to the contemplating mind, whether there be one world, or twenty, or twenty millions, if in their relation to life they are the mere equivalents of ours? or if they are so dissevered from us that we can look for no association with what in their life is more subtile and regal? We aim to rise, always from the lower to the higher; from science to art; from history to philosophy; from the study of books to sympathetic conference with masterful minds; from culture to character, and a nobler experience. The soul craves, and in prophetic moments it expects, in like manner to rise from lower levels, now familiar, to further and grander ranges of activity, and to contact with nobler forms of life. It wants the final 'vision Divine,' for which faculty has been given it; and immortality would lose its attraction if the courageous and eager spirit were there forever to be treading the round of preceding discoveries, and making acquisitions only counterparts of its present.

Ascension toward the unreached—an ultimate companionship with what at present transcends observation, and overtops thought—is man's instinctive impulse and hope. Whatever denies that, or lures or drives from it the thought of the world, will lower

the heights of human aspiration, and throw discredit on a spiritual instinct than which none nobler has been shown.

It will do more than this, as I have suggested. For this impulse which reaches toward realms of life above the present has not been a feeble or transient force, only sufficient to stir vague desire, or to animate fancy. It has been one of the most energetic of all the forces affecting our mysterious life ; and the large incitement of which it has been the vital and perennial source is conspicuous in history.

If it has not disciplined the practical understanding, as have studies in science, or metaphysical analysis, it has certainly given such scope and stimulation as nothing else could to the royal force of the Imagination—that faculty which seems most nearly akin to higher forms and powers of existence, and from which falls transfiguring lustre on all subordinate mental activity. Whatever exalts and invigorates this, and opens to it appropriate range, has to do with the noblest intellectual development ; and it is always the unattained, believed to exist, yet inaccessible to present research, which most allures and animates this. What lies beyond the snowy or verdurous circle of the hills, within which one's narrow life is passed—what lay beyond the mysterious seas, with their monotone of murmured monition or complaint, before the daring keels of commerce had challenged and crossed them—what lies amid or above the stars, now

that man has measured and weighed the earth, and hung it in its lowly place amid the constellations—that it is, surpassing discovery, eluding equally re-agent and spectroscope, of which no ephemeris can be computed, which stirs this commanding faculty in the mind. It is not satisfied with recalling the past, or invoking the dim and distant figures which tower on future earthly fields. It seeks to seize the shapes of power, the intensities of experience, yet unapproached, and to people with them ethereal realms. If such an outreach be denied, its finest and highest incitement fails, and discouragement and debility must take the place of exuberant impulse in this loveliest and lordliest faculty of the mind.

Indeed, all the intellectual powers must share, in their measure, in such depression, or such stimulation. For the mind is not a bundle of faculties, loosely associated, but a vital and energetic unity, wherein each force has its completeness in the sympathy of others, and shares in their augmented power. The sense of native nobleness in the soul is essential to the perfect energy of each faculty ; and that sense of nobleness is inevitably exalted by the conception of relations to what transcends the definite and imperious system of nature. Whatever carries us far from ourselves tends to broaden and exalt intellectual power. The mind which surveys, with a true apprehension, great periods in history, is invigorated and widened, as well as instructed, by that splendid exercise. Its very con-

sciousness seems to expand, its intimate energy to be reinforced, as it matches itself, in sympathetic reflection, with noble persons and surpassing careers. So the student contemplating with interpreting insight remote problems of philosophy, is more aware of the fineness and greatness of his power, for every sure and victorious hold which is realized by him on the principles there involved; and it is a majestic office of science—ranging in its view from the infinitely little to the indefinitely great, and infolding the creation in its reconciling thought—to stimulate and enhance intellectual faculty, by making it master, in thought at least, over force and law, as well as phenomena.

But most of all do we become sensible of the royal place which belongs to the spirit, most sure and efficient becomes the impulse thus imparted to the mind, when we rise in thought to what in essence surpasses the utmost elevation and range of physical nature, yet with which we are in vital alliance. The cottage or the college over-arched by the vast and shining star-domes, may sink to nothing in the comparison, as being in fact less when so measured than the speck of dust floating amid uncalculated azures. But the spirit, if there be one, in cottage or in college, which can pass beyond the luminous worlds or the unresolved nebulæ, and feel itself akin to whatever personal powers are on them, and to whatever tragedy or triumph they witness, that will be only sublimed by the action. In such a supreme apocalypse of

thought it will find inspirations which were else inconceivable.

The long, mechanic pacings to and fro,
The set gray life, and apathetic end,

will not be for it. Intensity of life will then be realized, in which each force is at its best: as marvels of discourse sometimes amaze us, poetic images flash upon us, from minds before on the common level, when they are passing—as they feel at least—through the shadows of death into the expanses of unimaginable light. The humblest mind, thus related in its consciousness to unattained splendors of life, becomes august in the sublimity of its thought.

An influence so surpassing, as it enters into life, affects of necessity every faculty. The constructive understanding takes alertness and enterprise, and is set upon larger and more fruitful activity. The fancy works with gladder grace. Even humor is gayer, and wit becomes more tenderly bright. The reason rises to clearer vision, and is enthroned in serener command. That consummate point in experience is reached where the child-nature inseparably infuses matured power, in which appears the element of genius. The consciousness of proximity to a life in the universe vaster than ours, whose circles involve but sweep beyond us, melodious, ethereal, and without limitation—whoever has this, has in him the boy still father of the man. He,

—by the vision splendid,
Is on his way attended ;

and the light in which the earth is apparelled fades not for him into the common light of day. In exhilarating freedom he walks thenceforth upon the high places. Expectation and success are the heritage of his mind. The scholar investigates with more discursive and rewarding inquisition. The inventor's thought plays more freely amid the occult combinations of force. Jurist and journalist, chemist and geologist, artist and explorer, each must respond to the stimulating power from that apprehended over-world; while, in the spirits most sensitive and profound, ineffable forces are brought into action. Then come to such majestic silences; the sabbaths of contemplation; the visioned hours of the spirit on its Patmos; when it no more is fretted with monotonous trifles, or wasted of its superlative life in the ceaseless tumult of visible things; when it sees itself connected with immensities and eternities, and is inwardly conscious of immortal vitality. Out of such moods comes what is noblest in thought; and the secret force which lifts men to them drops always from higher spheres, only seen as yet in far fore-gleam. When these cease to be recognized by man, the mind will miss the grandest force which yet has reached it.*

* "Thought is best when the mind is gathered into herself, and none of these things trouble her—neither sounds, nor sights, nor pain, nor any pleasure; when she has as little as possible to do with the body, and has no bodily sense or feeling, but is aspiring after being. . . . In this present life, I reckon that we make the nearest approach to knowledge when we have the least possible concern or interest in the body, and are not saturated with the bodily nature, but remain pure until the hour

Nor may we omit to notice, also, the inspiration which comes from the same high source to whatever is stateliest, loveliest, sovereign, in the domain of character.

I do not refer, of course, to any special graces or forces ascribed to special forms of religion, but to the general moral effect of the clear recognition of spheres supernal upon the personal spirit in man. Tranquillity is born of it. So are gentleness, gravity, and a grand aspiration. It is the condition of those august hopes which are essentially helpful to virtue. Chivalric disregard of danger and pain is as natural to it as the lift of the waves when the moon hangs above them. Out of it has streamed an invincible courage into the will, in the time of imminent earthly peril. From it have sprung the irresistible enthusiasms, which have matched and mastered the ferocities of power. It has been the stimulant to heroic consecration, which no resistance could daunt or break, any more than grape-shot can shatter the sunshine.

Martyrdom certainly affords no proof of any doctrine, only of the martyr's confidence in it. Missionary or monastic devotion may illustrate nothing beyond the height to which the human will can rise in its disdain of ordinary motives. But mission and martyrdom are at least grand facts in exhibition of

when God is pleased to release us. Then the foolishness of the body will be cleared away, and we shall be pure, and hold converse with other pure souls, and know of ourselves the clear light everywhere; and this is surely the light of truth." Socrates, in the *Phaedo*, 65, 66.

character; and no one can question that they are most familiar where the sense of vital powers and realms above the present is vivid and practical. Let Nature, as we see it, become to a man all that there is, pinning thought to the earth, and narrowing experience within sharp time-limits, and the will may still be stubbornly set to accomplish a purpose; but the joy in labor unrequited, the victory in lonely suffering, the eager self-sacrifice for the unseen—these will pass, with the ardor of a devotion no longer legitimate, and the splendor and solace of a lost expectation.

All really superb and delightful character must find, as it has found, motive and help in such apprehension of things transcendent. Coulanges has shown how rooted in the antique state was the thought of the Family, as vitally related to spheres beyond, with worship due from it to the spirits of those from whom its transmitted life had come. This was, in fact, the conservative force in the ancient society. So the Family among us has sacredness upon it, because standing in immortal relations, having its basis in a Divine plan, and making its sweet domestic loves the microcosm of all charity and worship. The Church, too, exists—according to its ideal, at least—with its vital fellowships in sacrament and service, to cherish whatever is chiefest in character, because of its fundamental premise of a life waiting beyond the present; and no society for grand and illustrious ethical culture can permanently continue on a slighter foundation.

The general estimate of spiritual values must be highest, the ideal of them most complete, where the Universe appears an open field for human experience, beginning now, to continue through unreckoned cycles. If there be other beings than man, and sublimer domains of life than those which we see, it may well be that all the powers which we possess shall seem insignificant when brought to comparison with those beyond; that our small knowledges shall there disappear, as tinted clouds, absorbed amid surpassing lights. But whatever of pure and high character is in us must still be worthy of affection and homage. The morally great is equally great on whatever parallel, or if on planes above them all. Spaces are nothing, circumstances nothing, to the loving, intrepid, magnanimous spirit. Wherever in the Universe are light and beauty, duty and grace, there must be the home of the soul which with them is in final accord.

Here, therefore, is the inexhaustible impulse to an intrinsic and beautiful nobleness. It is not from laws, teachings, examples, the maxims of prudence, or the dictates of conscience—it is from this immense conception of the timeless relations of the spirit in man, and of its possible coming association with persons and spheres surpassing thought, that the subtlest and strongest incentive comes to what is august and surpassing in virtue. If one had the chance to write a poem for spirits to read in higher realms—to mould the marble into lovely forms of ecstasy and passion

for them to contemplate—to paint the picture whose beauty should show no pallid tint or tremulous line beneath the searching heavenly lustres—with what infinite pains would he strive at his work ! That he can make his character worthy the free acceptance of those whose feet, sandalled with light, have trodden only ethereal paths, it is the grandest benefit of grace which God, if there be a God, has bestowed. It is assuredly the consummate expression of the power of protoplasm, if that it be which has built the creation ! And when the thought of such a result rises within one, the supreme law of character which dominates the world from Galilee and from Calvary needs no word to interpret, and no argument to defend it.

This has been shown, in examples uncounted. Because an Infinite Life has been recognized, supreme in character as in power—with illustrious spirits, wise, effulgent, and immortal in beauty—men have sought with an ardor beyond that of scholar, soldier, miner, for the whiteness of purity, and the moral glory of self-consecration. That virtues have appeared among those to whom all this was a dream, is of course also true. But the contrast offered by their examples, always pathetic, is often tragic. Their very ideal has wanted firm outline, and luminous supremacy over the soul. Celestial attractions have imparted no uplift to the hard-set and strenuous will. Without ardor of spirit, or the glad exhilaration of anticipating minds, they have toiled to satisfy moral judgment.

There is little to animate, though much to admonish, in their impatient and sad endeavors ; and nothing is more sure than that if the conception be displaced from the general mind of lucid and unwasting spheres with which our life is interlinked, the most vigorous incentive to a superlative virtue will fail from society, as the waters recede from bay or bar when the swing of the sea is no longer behind them.

Because such profound instincts in the soul, and such energetic forces, are addressed by the impression of what vastly outreaches the tangible and temporal system around us, it can not surprise us that great influence should have come from it into civilization : so that to remove what it has imparted to human achievement would be to impoverish the record of the race. Not only have schemes of Religion been born of it—many of which have been, no doubt, of limited value, if not of positive spiritual detriment, to human society—but into nearly everything illustrious in work the same invisible force has entered, and from it that work has taken distinctive quality and worth.

What would the history of philosophy be, except for the light and the loftiness which are in it by reason of such an intuitive apprehension of the soul's relation to vital systems grander than the present, and to One above all, who is only disclosed to the love which adores Him, while He writes the unfading records of His rule in the rush of orbs and the flash

of star fires? Under the plane-trees of the Academy—beneath the shadow of that Parthenon, which assuredly no accident had builded—Plato portrayed the world of phenomena as having origin and subsistence in and by a supernal series of Divine thoughts;* and from his day onward, in the field of philosophy, the idealists have been masters. No mechanical philosophy has had secular supremacy; and that form of speculation which reduces the personal spirit in man to physical terms, making thought itself, volition, passion, the result of simple molecular action, and binding the race in a sterner fatalism than any theologian ever imagined—it has spurted into sight in different communities, but it nowhere has reached abiding power. With whatever boldness it now may assert the practical equivalence of physics and psychology, the identity of the mind with the encephalic brain-mass, it can not command human consent. The spiritual consciousness refuses its authority. It

* “Every one will see that he [the Artificer of the world] must have looked to the eternal, for the world is the fairest of creations and he is the best of causes. And since it is of such a nature, the world has been framed by him with his eye fixed upon that which is apprehended by reason and mind, and is unchangeable, and if this be admitted, it must of necessity be a copy of something.”

“Until the creation of time, all things had been made in the likeness of that which was their pattern; but in so far as the universe did not include within itself all animals, in this respect there was still a want of harmony. This defect the Creator supplied by fashioning them after the nature of the pattern; and as the mind perceives ideas or species of a certain nature and number in the ideal animal, he thought that this created world ought to have them of a like nature and number.”—*Timaeus*, 29, 39.

knows that not out of such a philosophy has come, or can come, true impulse to fine spiritual endeavor, or any satisfaction to the soul's aspirations. Invisible instincts, as real and ready as impalpable atmospheres, pull it to the ground, an extinguished meteor, smoking and sterile.

But that account of the soul in man which recognizes in it elements and relations that connect it indissolubly with unseen and paramount spiritual powers, and which expects for it a more vivid life, in spheres beyond our present experience—centuries and countries become memorable by this! Its teachers and champions have been the really illuminating minds, from whom letters and liberties, laws and arts, have taken inspiration. They have flung upon the earth a light so supreme that even they who were unapt for such high speculation have felt the shadows growing transparent upon their path. The Stoics as well as the Platonists—with their Semitic affinities, their ethical spirit, and their comparative disdain of physics—were thus impelled to set the soul in a kingly place, and to gird it about with vast relations. So, only, could Stoicism have survived, not as a temper, but as a philosophy, as giving a measure of probable explication to the mysterious spirit in man.

Haunted as this is with strange reminiscences, that almost hint at pre-existence, alive as it is with august expectations, capable of moods of which no language can be the interpreter, feeling itself in kinship of nat-

ure with minds which surpass it, and with ranges of experience not yet attained, it must at least have a universe for its home, such as Seneca or Antoninus offered, if it may not be sure—as they were not—of transcendent personalities, and a creative and holy Will, with which to stand in spiritual communion.* But whoever makes this final conception of its nature and place signal and governing to man's thought, exerts an influence over fine minds more commanding than that of soldier or statesman; and the records of his interpreting discourse are more quickening to such than those of any arts or empires. Whatever takes the exalting influence of the spheres supernatural, and of our intrinsic relation to them, out of philosophy, can only strip it of its essential grace and renown.

I need scarcely remind you what ethereal elements,

*“A great and generous thing is the human soul. It suffers no bounds to be set for it save those which are common to it with God. . . . Its country is whatever the highest universe includes in its compass. . . . It does not allow limitations of time. ‘All years,’ it says, ‘are mine’; no age is closed against great spirits, all time is pervious to thought. . . . One day the secrets of nature shall be disclosed to thee, the darkness shall be dispersed, a shining light shall smite upon thee from every side. Think how great the brightness shall be of so many celestial bodies, mingling their lustre! No cloud shall trouble the clear serene; each side of heaven shall shine with equal splendor; day and night are but vicissitudes of the lower atmosphere.”—*Seneca, Ep. Mor.*, cii.

“Whithersoever thou turnest thyself, thou shalt see him [God] meeting with thee; nothing is void of him; he himself fills all his work. Call him Nature, Fate, Fortune: all are names of the same God, variously exercising his power.”—*Seneca, De Benef., Lib. iv., cap. viii.*

Compare “Meditations of Marcus Aurelius,” xi. 1; ix. 28.

graceful and noble, have been imparted by the same immense force to all best forms of human expression, in poetry, art, or the eloquence which has swayed and exalted men's minds; or what energies have flowed from it into history and society, giving them, in fact, whatever they possess which holds to them permanently the admiration of mankind.

The supernatural element in the mechanism of poems is certainly not needful to their highest effect. It may, perhaps, repulse the mind, as an over-bold effort to bring the supernal into such a contact with our palpable sphere as its august supremacy forbids. Yet even this is not always without its impression on the sensitive spirit, which meets it with indefinite throbs of response, as cavern-waves tremble in sympathy with far-off tides.

The wine-colored waters breaking around the high-beaked ships, the camp-fires glittering on the plain, the splendor of armor shining in the air as with the flash of mountain fires, the troubled dust rising in mist before the tramp of rapid feet, greaves with their silver clasps, helmets crested with horse-hair plumes, the marvellous shield, with triple border, blazoned with manifold intricate device, and circled by the ocean-stream, the changeful and impetuous fight, the anguish and rage, and the illustrious funeral-pile—not by these, though moving before us in epic verse, and touched with iridescent lights by the magic of genius, is the mind held captive to the *Iliad*, as by its shadowy

morning-time spirit of 'surmise and aspiration'; by the tender and daring divine illusions, which see the air quick with veiled Powers, and the responding earth the haunted field of their Olympian struggle and debate.*

The circles of Hell into which Dante entered, beneath the dim and sad inscription—in which he heard with fainting spirit the story of Francesca, whose city of fire, and river of blood, and sterile plain with scorching flakes, he pictured on immortal verse—the snow-white rose, of saintly multitudes, with faces of flame and wings of gold, which he beheld when in the upturned gaze of Beatrice he had seen the day new-risen on the day, the Eternal Glory which he was at last permitted to touch with unconsumed sight, and of which he would leave some sparkle for coming time—we know how the genius of Michael Angelo, austere and vast, was impressed by all this; how it reappears in spirit on the walls which he glorified;†

* "We talked of Homer. I remarked how real and direct the interposition of the Gods seems. 'That is infinitely delicate and human,' said Goethe, 'and I thank heaven that the times are gone by when the French were permitted to call this interposition of the Gods "machinery." But, really, to learn to appreciate merits so vast required some time, for it demanded a complete regeneration of their modes of culture.'"—*Eckermann's Conv. with Goethe, Feb. 24, 1830.*

† "How deeply the study of Dante influenced his art appears not only in the lower part of the 'Last Judgment': we feel that source of stern and lofty inspiration in his style at large; nor can we reckon what the world lost when his volume of drawings in illustration of the Divine Comedy perished at sea."—*Symonds' "Renaissance in Italy," Appendix II., p. 514.*

how other masters have shown the same impress, at Florence and at Pisa. It were certainly wholly too much to affirm that in its bold and terrible ministry to the sense of something outlying time, and of transcendent reality, lay nothing of that magnificent power over Italy and Europe which only rose in ascension when the stately tomb closed at Ravenna.

And so in Milton: the floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire with which the rebellious are overwhelmed, the burning marle vaulted with flame, the battle on ærial plains, where spirits are armed in adamant and gold, while the Messiah rides sublime, on sapphire throne, in the crystalline sky—surely it hardly can be denied that something of unsurpassed splendor and power has streamed from thence into English letters.

The very construction of the great poems which mark eras in history thus incorporates the conception of realms unseen, whose energies images only suggest, whose vastness is too wide to even loosely “zone the sun.” In fanciful discovery, or mysterious adumbration, they people the air with glooms or glories beyond the measure of human thought; and this is part of their hold on the world. The *Æneid* has been called, not unjustly, a “religious epic.”

But deeper and more intimate is the power which enters into the inmost life of poetry from the spiritual cognizance of spheres above sense. It would be presumptuous for me to say this, before these honored

and laureled poets, if it were not their presence, with the lesson of their work, which prompts the saying. Poets sing best, according to the illustrious Greek master of thought and style, when carried out of themselves by a Divine madness, and possessed by an influence which then their words impart to others.* And this surpassing mystical afflatus comes with utmost power upon them when the high intimations of realms beyond the empyrean surprise their souls. In silence, oftenest, though sometimes as with convulsing force, the transfiguring power falls on the spirit attuned to song.

Then even nature is more clearly interpreted, in its deeper meanings; because, as Joubert says, the poet with rays of light so purges and clarifies material forms, that we are permitted to see the universe as it exists in the thought of its author.†

* "For all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems, not as works of art, but because they are inspired and possessed. . . . They tell us that they gather their strains from honeyed fountains, out of the gardens and dells of the Muses; thither, like the bees, they wing their way; and this is true. For the poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him: when he has not attained to this state, he is powerless and unable to utter his oracles. . . . For in this way the God would seem to indicate to us, and not allow us to doubt, that these beautiful poems are not human or of man, but divine and of gods; and that the poets are only the interpreters of the gods, by whom they are severally possessed."—*Ion*, 533-4.

† "Or, que fait le poëte? A l'aide de certains rayons, il purge et vide les formes de matière, et nous fait voir l'univers tel qu'il est dans la pensée de Dieu même. Il ne prend de toutes choses que ce qui leur vient du ciel."—*Pensées*, 285.

Even the beauty which picturesque verse loves to celebrate depends for its tender and supreme recognition on such spiritual insight. It is a recent notion of physicists that beauty is never an end in itself, in the outward and evident scheme of things, but exists only to serve utilities. The notion, I must think, has its root in another—that the system has originated, not in intelligence and beneficent purpose, but in the development of mechanical forces. The apprehension of a prescient ordaining mind, behind all phenomena, loving beauty for its own sake, and delighting to lodge it in the curl of the wood or the sheen of the shell, as well as in the petals and perfume of flowers, the crest of waves, or the prismatic round of the rainbow—this is indispensable to the clear recognition, or the sympathetic rendering, of even the outward beauty of nature. Then only does this stand in essential correlation with spiritual states, which find images in it; while then alone does it knit the present, on which it casts its scattered lights, with vanished paradises, and spheres of beauty still unapproached.

There is a transcendent mood of the spirit wherein the meanest flower that blows awakens thoughts too deep for tears; when the grass blade is oracular, and the common bush seems ‘afire with God,’ and when the splendors of closing day repeat the flash of jasper and beryl. It is when the soul is keenly conscious of relations to systems surpassing sense, and to a crea-

tive personal Spirit by whom all things are interfused. Aside from that, the yellow primrose is nothing more; and the glory of the sunset—seen from Sorrento, or seen from Cambridge—fails from the hues of lucid gold or glowing ruby, because there fall no more suggestions, from all their splendors, of realms beyond the fading vision.

But if this be true of outward nature, how much more clearly of the spirit of man! Then only can this be manifested to us in the mystery of verse, with any just interpretation of what is profound and typical in it, when it is recognized as personal, moral, of Divine origin and Divine affiliations, with unsounded futures waiting for it; when, in other words, it is set in relation with immense and surpassing realms of life. I may not properly illustrate from the living, but one example irresistibly suggests itself. Hawthorne's genius did not utter itself in rhyme, but how solitary, high-musing, it moves in this atmosphere of the essential mystery of life, as in the tenebrous splendor of sombre clouds, all whose edges burn with gold!

Without something of this, poetry always is commonplace. Outward action may be vividly pictured. Tragical events may find fit memorial. The manifold pageants, popular or imperial, may march before us, through many cantos, as on a broad and brilliant stage. But these, alone, are as the paltry plumes of fire-weed, taking the place of the burned forest, whose every tree-stem was "the mast of some great

ammiral." The grand and imperative intuitions of the soul, which affirm the ideal, and are prophetic of things above nature—the "thoughts that wander through eternity," the love, prayer, passion, hope, which have no ultimate consummation on earth, and which in themselves predict immortality—these, which must furnish the substance of poetry, are only represented, in the most ductile and musical verse, upon the basis of the spiritual philosophy. Poets differ, as do the colors which astronomy shows in the radiant suns—blue, purple, gold—bound in the firm alliances of the heavens. But a sun black in substance, and shooting bolts of darkness from it, were as easily conceivable as a Comtist Shakespeare or an agnostic Wordsworth.

To all forms of art, in its higher departments, the same majestic super-sensible influence is as obviously vital. Music—we can not even imagine it, in symphonies and sonatas as those of Beethoven, in masses as of Haydn or Mozart, in fugue, oratorio, or the solemn Gregorian chant, except as it voices feeling and thought which are not fettered to the level of the earth; except as it catches a secret inspiration from hopes, visions, supreme aspirations, which are free of the universe, and which overtop Time. This subtlest tone-speech, which, with its infinite wail or triumph, gives voice as language never could to what is precious and passionate in us—this, if nothing else, declares man's relation, in the ultimate reach and rev-

elry of his spirit, to something beyond the search of sense. No form of Religion has been more dependent than is this august and delicate art on suggestions whose echo, except for it, no ear might hear. The triumph of Resurrection, the awful chords of the Dies Iræ, are themes for its mysterious ministry. Dr. Channing well said that it is "inexplicable"; and that "the Christian world, under its power, has often attained to a singular consciousness of Immortality." Heard in the twilight, how often, with us, has it carried the spirit above shadow and show into immeasurable brightness and calm!

So in painting. We know what glory fell on the canvas when the supernal story of the Gospels streamed, with lights that seemed to come from above the earth, on the minds which moved the early pencils. From the Convent of Assisi, and from the inspiring legend of St. Francis, went the strong impulse of the Umbrian school. It is the middle-age spirit, feeling itself proximate to the gates of either heaven or hell, which breaks into expression in Cimabue or Giotto, or in the figures of Fra Angelico—"embodied ecstasies," as they have been called, "upon a background of illuminated gold." The great collections find always among the works so inspired their master-pieces. It is not the portrait of Pontiff or Emperor, or of any lovely matron or maid, it is not the vivid and elaborate picture of scenes of human coronation or debate, but it is the lucid and

tranquil splendor that lies still on the Transfiguration, it is the solemn majesty of the Supper, or the vast and unsearchable tragedy of the Cross, thick with mysterious glooms—to which the observer always hastens, and the memory of which interprets art to him, as lifting the spirit toward realms transcendent. The Holy Night of Correggio illuminates the gallery. The Magdalen, or the Master, the shining wave of seraphic wings, or the gleam of the trumpet of final summons, are in the atmosphere of pinacothek or palace where Italy and Germany assemble their treasures. Cherubic faces glow on the canvas where Raphael enthrones the Virgin Mother. The earthly spirit of Rubens himself loses its grossness, his pencil becomes exalting and tender, in saintly sadness, when he confronts the Descent from the Cross.

So marbles rise to immortal renown, not in the busts of Aristides or Antoninus, of Cato or Trajan, or of the builder of Roman empire, but in the forms which perpetuate among men the early visions of supernatural grace and majesty, in the virginal Diana or the Apollo. The stone itself seems almost quickened into poetry or music, when angelic figures, apostolic raptures, the majesty of the lawgiver taught of God, break palpitating through it. And when Thorwaldsen has moulded it at last into the perfect image of the Christ, as his mind discerns that, he feels at once that his genius is failing. His satisfaction is his sentence; since his conception of that to which nature

is only the vassal no more transcends his imitative touch.

So in lordliest buildings—it is always their connection with what is unseen which gives the final majesty and rhythm. It is not the palace, with splendid façade, and internal wealths of mosaic and marquetry—it is not the fortress, the theatre, or the bourse, which best expresses or animates the genius whose subduing thought sets in motion the quarry. One must build to the praise of a Being above, to build the noblest memorial of himself. The thought of the something unsearchable and immense, toward which all human life is tending—the thought of domains of mysterious height, and unhorizoned expanse, with which the expectant soul in man has already relations—this must exalt and sanctify the spirit, that it may pile the stubborn rock into superb and lovely proportions. And with it must come a sense of intervention from such higher realms, to lift the environed human spirit toward that which transcends it, and to open the paths to immortal possession. Then, Brunelleschi may set his dome on unfaltering piers. Then, Angelo may verily ‘hang the Pantheon in the air.’ Then the unknown builder, whose personality disappears in his work, may stand an almost inspired mediator between the upward-looking thought and the spheres overhead. Each line then leaps with a swift aspiration, as the vast structure rises, in nave and transept, into pointed arch and vanishing spire. The groined roof

grows dusky with majestic glooms ; while, beneath, the windows flame, as with apocalyptic light of jewels. Angelic presences, sculptured upon the portal, invite the wayfarer, and wave before him their wings of promise. Within is a worship which incense only clouds, which spoken sermons only mar. The building itself becomes a worship, a Gloria in Excelsis, articulate in stone ; the noblest tribute offered on earth, by any art, to Him from whom its impulse came, and with the ineffable majesty of whose spirit all skies are filled !

Not art, alone, feels this vast impulse which falls in its quickening splendor from above. It enters into human life ; gives conquering courage to human society ; develops what is noblest of power in the race, and becomes the spring of its grandest endeavors. With illustrations of the energy which has been poured from it, into the action of persons and of peoples, history is vivid. How it looms before us in the vast panorama of the Crusades—setting nations in movement, shattering feudalism, opening the way for International Law, augmenting men's knowledge and giving positive expansion to their minds, bringing Europe and Asia face to face, and pushing men forth on those restless quests which at last picked up this continent from the seas ! Plainly, such movements were possible, only, as fealty to beings and to interests of a paramount authority appeared to demand them. Their banners could do nothing else than bear the emblem of a world supernatural.

We need not go back to times mediæval. It was the same incalculable force which burst into almost equal exhibition in the terrible struggle of the Netherland burghers against the power and rage of Spain—which one of your recent illustrious members has celebrated in a prose rich and melodious as an epic. That fierce and almost unending fight on sea and land, the desperate self-devotion which cut the dykes, and would give the drowned plains to the sea rather than yield them to the invader, the absolutely unconquerable will which defeat could not daunt nor delays weary, nor the death of the leader fatally break, the final recklessness of all pain and all assault, which bore starvation and did not flinch, and which never would yield while a hand remained to light a match, or an arm was left to lift a lance—all which makes the story sublime, and in fame immortal, came from a faith in things unseen. It was in the measureless energy of that, that the weak at last conquered the strong, and impassioned peasants, citizens, women, expelled from their coasts the richest and most insolent power of the world. Hardly another scene in history is more significant or impressive than that of the starving people, when the siege of Leyden had been suddenly raised, staggering to the church to offer their faint but praising worship, before their lips had tasted bread.*

* "Magistrates and citizens, wild Zealanders, emaciated burgher guards, sailors, soldiers, women, children—nearly every living person

The same force was shown in the Huguenots as well—whose distinguished descendants have had high honor in our history ; and the same, as clearly, by the Puritans of England. The invincible Ironsides who bore without shrinking the shattering shock of Rupert's charge, were plain house-fathers, susceptible as others to fear or pain, and with no rare supremacy of nature. But they thought, at least, that they knew One in whom they had believed ; that He was a King who in righteousness did make war ; and that for His faithful, amid the circles of sublimer existence, crowns were reserved. No angels hovered, "clad in white samite," upon their dim and murky skies. No celestial panoplies were ranged in front of their grim lines. But 'the good old Cause' for which they stood, to their apprehension, was related not only to liberties below, but to welfares immortal overhead. They strove for interests so supreme that all the spheres had a stake in the struggle ; and, in the unsubduable strength which thence possessed them, they conquered great

within the walls—all repaired without delay to the great church, stout Admiral Boisot leading the way. The starving and heroic city, which had been so firm in its resistance to an earthly king, now bent itself in humble gratitude before the King of kings. After prayers, the whole vast congregation joined in the thanksgiving hymn. Thousands of voices raised the song, but few were able to carry it to its conclusion ; for the universal emotion, deepened by the music, became too full for utterance. The hymn was abruptly suspended, while the multitude wept like children. This scene of honest pathos terminated, the necessary measures for distributing food and for relieving the sick were taken by the magistracy."—*The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Vol. II., pp. 576–7.

captains, flung their challenge to the haughtiest powers, and set the foot on the neck of their king.

Wherever conscientious and consecrated men have been ranged in stern battle for the liberty and the law which to them were divine, the same energy has appeared. The intimate sense of personal freedom is based most securely on the radical sense of human relationship to perennial systems of power and life. Democracy there has its surest foundation; the differences of social position and training becoming imperceptible beneath the height of this relation, as the different heights of house-roofs disappear, when measured against Canopus or Orion.

In our own protracted Revolutionary struggle, there was not wanting this impulse from on high, though it was scarcely as signal, perhaps, as it elsewhere has been. But religious conviction, as well as political instinct or theory, had its part in the contest. Sermons and prayers were as really engaged, on behalf of Independence, as were muskets and howitzers. To many of the nobler leaders of thought it seemed apparent that the scattered populations who had been so singularly brought here and trained, in seeking their final separation from Great Britain were moving on the lines of a strategy above man's, and had forces of Providence for their mighty pioneers. The feeling grew stronger as the struggle went on. It was scarcely, I think, so vivid and impressive with those who almost without expectation

fought and fell on yonder hill, that bright June day, as it came to be afterward—with those who carried their banners unbent after the frightful Long Island disaster, with those who sternly outwatched the winter at Valley Forge, with those who yet waged the wasting battle, until at Yorktown they saw its end. They were mechanics, laborers, farmers, who had seemed to have no chance whatever against disciplined troops. But aids unexpected had come to them from afar. On the edge of defeat they had more than once snatched surprising victory. And while, no doubt, a hundred motives intermingled to keep them faithful, there grew an impression, of which they partook, that the Divine plan was somehow connected with their success, and that the developed independence of the country had relation to schemes, moral and Christian, in which the future should exult. One hears the diapason of such a supreme conception of things rolling beneath the crash of guns and the flurries of debate. It is that conception, in thoughtful minds, which ever since has lifted that struggle to the higher levels of historical significance.

Assuredly such a sense of relation to ideal interests, and to welfares more permanent than any of Time, was essentially involved in our late Civil War. It was out of no atheistic philosophy, it was under no over-shadowing impression of the sole reality of that which is physical, that the vast enthusiasms of that su-

preme time sprang up and bloomed. The young glad life which went down in blood on ghastly fields,—of which you have here so many memorials!—it was offered at the summons of interests so illustrious that all the suns are only their fleeting physical basis. It recognized man, on behalf of whom it was given, as related to worlds beyond the sweep of human sense, and as so having indefeasible rights of culture and of worship. An ethical system found its voice in the long cannonade—sovereign in the earth, because sovereign for all spheres. The supremacy of the spirit which rose over dangers, dungeons, deaths, had its source in the sense of a spiritual universe, in which all grand and lovely souls are powers and peers. The sacrifice was too great, the following anguish too overwhelming, if such a universe does not exist. Only from it, and from our essential relationship to it, could have come the paramount moral impulse, sufficient at once to inspire the daring and heal the grief.

Nor is it in such vast contests alone that the impulse has been shown of this recognition of vital realms surpassing the bounds of space and time. In the moral impression made on the world by teachers like Edwards, or like Channing—frail, but majestic in spiritual force—it has been manifest, as clearly as aforetime in Bernard or Anselm. Universities have sprung from it, and in it have found their vitalizing force. They were founded, no doubt, in a credulous time, when many things seemed real and sure which

to us are grotesque. None the less, however, were they founded, in the old world and here, upon the conviction of vast and unseen vital domains, to which man is related; upon the sense of divine dignities thus investing the soul; upon the impression that Time is great, only as bearing in its scant round the quickening seeds of further destiny, that the earth is great only as associated with more sublime realms, and that wealth and wisdom both are regal when they serve the welfare of that on-looking and inestimable spirit beside which the stars are painted dust.

It was natural that under impressions like these the humble school of William of Champeaux should grow to the great University of Paris; that out of obscure conventual institutes should rise the many affiliated colleges of Cambridge and Oxford. It was natural that in the utmost poverty of the early New England this great and distinguished University should be founded—for Christ and the Church, or for the Truth. As long as such convictions continue, connecting man by the frame of his being with the vast and enduring over-world, discerning in the mystery of his life divine energies and immortal predictions, the institutions which were born of them will remain, expanding still to larger proportions, and chronicling the centuries with their concentric rings of growth. But if the time should ever come when materialistic or monistic theories shall supersede the ancient thought—finding in mind only a result of mechan

ical force inducing a certain stream of feelings, discrediting existence amid the immensities, and either denying a personal Spirit who frames the creation, or relegating the thought of Him to the regions of an uncertain hypothesis — Universities may continue, and possibly for a time may be physically enlarged, but the glory will have vanished from library and laboratory, as well as from chapel. There may be still

— those obstinate questionings
Of sense, and outward things;

but the serene and large contemplation, the profound introspection, the deep delight in art, philosophy, heroism, song, the far-exulting sweep of the spirit in its vital expectation, over eons and spheres yet unrevealed—these will depart. The earthly figure alone will continue, without ægis or aureole; and the short-lived animal, whose spirit is to turn to dust with his brain, will hardly look without amazement upon the service and sacrifice of the Fathers.

So it is, by an unchangeable law, that the Christian Religion, through the frankness, breadth, simplicity, grandeur, with which it affirms the Supernatural, and makes that apparent to the mind of the world, becomes the chief patron of such Universities, and pours from its unwasting force a supreme inspiration on every endeavor for mental and for spiritual culture. Men may criticise its records, and variously interpret some of its doctrines; but wherever it goes,

there breathes an influence into the total air of society out of unsounded depths of age and space, and from spheres bright with illuminated souls; and the tree will burgeon in sunless wastes, sooner than any great school of learning will bloom in abundant perennial vigor without the light of Bethlehem upon it.

GENTLEMEN, OF THE PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY:

In the measure of whatever power we have, it surely belongs to us to endeavor, if only as considerate of true secular welfare, that this recognition, profound and prophetic, of the greatness of the personal spirit in man, and of its relation to sublime realms of universal life, shall not pass away from our eager and commanding American society. Here is the sudden assembling of the nations, attracted by opportunity, compacted in liberty. Here is the wealth, of furrowed field and forest height, of river-beds gleaming, and hills crowded, with waiting metals. The land reverberates with the roll of swift wheels, and waters echo the throb of the engine, while mechanisms spring from the virile and fruitful life of the people, almost as roses from out the juicy shoots of June. But everything in the future of whatever is best here depends on the maintenance of this sense of relationship, in our immediate incipient life, to domains of experience of which no telescope gives us a hint, but which send out to meet us august premonitions. Art, poetry, a noble philosophy, as really as theol-

ogy, have here their condition; even generous liberties, copious and continuing public charities, whatever is truly distinguished in government, whatever is morally great in history.

We stand surrounded by no such monuments of an eminent Past as are centres of fine incitement abroad. All the more is it needful, on this unsheltered continent, that we recognize the enduring systems of life, older than suns, above cities and states and stellar spaces, and feel, as Pascal said, that "then only is man great and incomparable, when considered according to his end."* The searching of nature goes on all the time, with accelerating speed, and the noblest success. All the more, I judge, should it be ours, in whatever profession, of whatever communities or special opinions, to see that man is not "lost," as one has said, "in the bosom of the immensity and splendor of nature"; to maintain the preëminence of the sovereign personal spirit in him over all nerve-tissues, with all cerebral convolutions; to maintain the accordant supremacy in the Universe of the spiritual order over the physical, the immutable sublimity, the superlative splendor, of realms of existence to which the prophesying spirit points, as having with them already, in its mysterious and prophetic life, embryonic connection.

If that impression does not remain on this intrepid

* "Thoughts of Pascal," chap. ii., sec. 14.

and powerful people, into whose veins all nations pour their mingling blood, it will be our immense calamity. Public action, without it, will lose the dignity of consecration. Eloquence, without it, will miss what is loftiest, will give place to a careless and pulseless disquisition, or fall to the flatness of political slang. Life, without it, will lose its sacred and mystic charm. Society, without it, will fail of inspirations, and be drowned in an animalism whose rising tides will keep pace with its wealth.

It is the delightful assurance of Science that the tear and the star are equally embraced in an infinite scheme—"the glow-worm, and the fire-sea of the sun"—and that one law regulates the phyllotactic arrangement of leaves upon stems and the vast revolutions of the planets in the heavens. In like manner it is our prerogative to feel that the humblest life, which has intellect and will in it, is associated intimately with unreached cycles, surpassing thought, to which it has organic relation. On the full assurance of this fundamental scheme of the Universe has rested hitherto the philosopher's enthusiasm, the martyr's self-sacrifice, the hero's endurance. On this affirmative and solid impression has securely been builded whatever has been grandest and most charming in the Past. Only that which shall make the same conviction as wide and controlling in the centuries to come can give to them true power and beauty, esthetic grace, intellectual vision, moral wisdom.

It is for us, then, personally to live in the clear apprehension of that unmeasured over-world, the shadow of whose glory fell not on Hebrew hills alone, but on Grecian, Persian, Indian heights, some echoes of whose magisterial harmonies have been heard in all superior spirits, and the touch of whose far-shining prediction on any pure mind makes hope elate and purpose high. We do not doubt this, I am sure. But high contemplation, with a deep and delicate moral experience, alone can give us that certainty of it which the great souls have had. Retreating inward, we shall ascend upward, till the vital realms surpassing Nature become luminous to our thought; and then—as jewels have sometimes been fancied to become impenetrated in their sensitive substance with the splendor of sunshine, till they emitted a subsequent lustre through darkening shades—our spirits, steeped in this supreme vision, shall brighten others with irradiating glow.

Nothing nobler than this can be proposed to any man. It is the supremest human office, in whatever relations, and whatever position, rising above the investing physical forces and laws, discerning the intensity and the boundlessness of life with which the spirit in man is allied, to make these also inspiring to others: that thus through us may be transfused a glory from them into the minds which we affect; that we may cast from our brief years something of this transfiguring light upon the life of coming times; that we may

honor as we ought that visioned and masterful spirit within, whose thought and love bear in themselves immortal presage; that we may honor Him above, in whose unseen infolding life the Universe rests,

“And make our branches lift a golden fruit,
Into the bloom of Heaven.”

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